DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 109 907 FL 006 994

AUTHOR Sauer, Keith
TITLE Sentential Complementation in Romanian.
INSTITUTION Washington Univ., Seattle.
SPONS AGENCY Institute of International Studies (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO BR-67-7901
PUB DATE 13 May 72
CONTRACT OEC-0-72-0918
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Conference on Romanian Language and Literature (Seattle, Washington, May 12-13, 1972); For related document, see FL 006 989

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Deep Structure; Descriptive Linguistics; Language Universals; Romance Languages; *Romanian; *Semantics; *Sentence Structure; Structural Analysis; Surface Structure; Syntax; Transformation Generative Grammar; Uncommonly Taught Languages; *Verbs
IDENTIFIERS NDEA Title VI

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the syntactic properties, in Romanian, of one kind of subordination, namely Sentential Predicate Complementation. Some generalizations are offered concerning the relationship between the meaning and the syntactic properties of these constructions. The complement structures are isolated into groups according to verb selection: (1) verbs which permit no independent selection of complement subject or tense; and (2) verbs with no restrictions on complement subject or tense. These categories are then examined for consistent semantic content. It is concluded that when tense in the embedded sentence is redundant, it is eliminated and either the infinitive or subjunctive, both essentially tenseless, is inserted. When, however, there are no restrictions, indicative complements occur, since the indicative contains the full range of tenses. Since similar principles seem to exist in English and other Romance languages, it is suggested that some principles of economy are at work in the distribution of complement constructions. (Author/AM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED109907

University of Washington

Conference on

ROMANIAN LANGUAGE
AND
LITERATURE

May 12-13, 1972
Seattle, Washington

"Sentential Complementation in Romanian"

by

Keith Sauer

Supported by

The Institute of International Studies
of the Office of Education

The Graduate School of the University of Washington

The Department of Slavic (and East European)
Languages and Literature

FL006994

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Linguistic research within Generative Grammar has been undergoing an evolution in the past several years from grammars which attempted to formally generate the sentences of a language with the simplest set of rules, towards a serious investigation of the complex set of interrelationships between meaning and syntax. Reflecting that trend, what I would like to do in this paper is to explore the syntactic properties, in Romanian, of one kind of subordination, namely Sentential Predicate Complementation. Rather than attempting to refute or support any of the currently competing theoretical models I will concentrate on offering what I feel are some valid generalizations concerning the relationship between the meaning and the syntactic properties of these constructions.

By sentential complementation is generally meant those sentences embedded in a particular manner into another sentence, normally as subject or object of the verb of the matrix sentence. What is needed is an explanation for the distribution of the various manifestations which these embedded sentences assume in the surface structure; in particular the grammatical connectives which introduce the complement sentence, and the mood of the subordinate verb. These are: <u>că</u> with indicative mood, (<u>ca</u>) <u>să</u> with subjunctive, and (<u>a</u>) with an infinitive. Sentences (1)-(3) illustrate the constructions involved:

(1) a. Am aflat că aici plouă mult.

'I have learned that it rains a lot here.'

b. Mă bucur că aţi venit.

'I'm glad that you have come.'

c. Mi se pare că ai dreptate.

'It seems to me that you are right.'

(2) a. E necesar că astăzi să-mi dai un răspuns.

'It's necessary that today you give me an answer.'

b. E necesar să-mi dai un răspuns astăzi.

'It's necessary that you give me an answer today.'

c. Nu e destul ca o naţie să-si aibă loc pe harta lumii.

'It's not enough that a nation have a place on the map of the world.'

d. Eşti gata să pleci la şcoală?

'Are you ready to leave for school?'

e. Copilul a început să plîngă.

'The boy began to cry.'

(3) a. Nu pot merge.

'I can't go.'

b. Copilul a început a plînge.

'The boy began to cry.'

c. El a încetat de a mai veni aici.

'He has stopped coming here.'

I have combined ca...să into a single complementizer, since ca is inserted into complement sentences only when the complement subject, or some other element, precedes the verb of the subordinate sentence, as we can see by (2a) and (2b), where astăzi is to the left of the verb.[1]

In a grammar in which the deepest level of representation characterizes the meaning of a sentence, those superficial elements which are not semantically significant, such as conjunctions like the above, which serve merely to

introduce a substructure, are not present in that underlying structure, but are introduced by syntactic rule. This has been the case with most studies of sentential complementation since Rosenbaum's work in English in the mid 60s.[2] One notable exception is Vasiliu and Golopentia's Sintaxa Transformaţională a Limbii Române, where all the conjunctions as well as the infinitive markers are introduced in the deep structure,[3] however, but they were working within an earlier framework in which deep structures closely resembled surface structures. Besides, it is not immediately apparent that these conjunctions have no semantic content.[4]

The most comprehensive studies of sentential complementation that I know of, in chronological order, are the dissertations of Peter Rosenbaum for English, Robin Lakoff for Latin, and my own for Spanish.[5] What I propose to do in the remainder of this paper is to briefly examine sentential complementation in Romanian from the approach of these three studies and in doing so suggest a set of principles which I feel most adequately explains the facts.

In a model like Rosenbaum's each sentence embedding verb would be associated with a syntactic feature matrix which in essence specifies which complement constructions are compatible with it. For example, the verb a afla 'to find, find out' would be associated with the feature that triggers the rule inserting că and the indicative mood, given the grammaticality of sentence (4) alongside the ungrammaticality of (5):

(4) Am aflat că plecaţi astăzi.

(5) a. *Am aflat să plecaţi astăzi.
    b. *Am aflat a pleca astăzi.

} 'I've found (learned) that you are leaving today.'

The verb a încerca 'to try' on the other hand would be associated with the features leading to the insertion of să plus subjunctive or optionally a plus infinitive in the literary language, as in (6) a and b, but not (7):

(6) a. Am încercat să dormim.
    b. Am încercat a dormi.
    'We tried to sleep.'

(7) *Am încercat că dormim.

This kind of analysis has several weaknesses, but the point I would like to emphasize is that it provides no insight at all into the nature of complement constructions. Stating arbitrary syntactic features for each subject embedding verb simply provides a mechanism for generating the grammatical sentences, but doesn't begin to explain the facts of distribution.

Robin Lakoff, in her analysis of complementation in English and Latin recongnized the fact that there is often a correlation between the meaning of the matrix verb and the type of complement structure it occurs with. She provided the means for incorporating this relationship into the grammar by introducing the notion of "redundancy rules", which in essence enabled her to state formally the traditional grammarians' observations that verbs of the same semantic class normally occur with the same type of subordination. For Romanian, a redundancy rule for example would state that verbs of communication normally require the insertion of indicative complements, as in (8):

(8) a. Profesorul a anunțat că pleacă.
    'The professor announced that he was leaving.'
    b. Ion a strigat că dușmanii au plecat.
    'Ion shouted that the enemy had left.'

c. Livia spune că este bolnavă.

'Livia says that she is sick.'

d. Tata mi-a scris că a pierdut banii.

'Dad wrote me that he has lost the money.'

We will return below to discuss apparent counterexamples to these, where verbs of communication occur with subjunctive complements.

Another redundancy rule would state that verbs of initiation, on the other hand, are compatible with both subjunctive and infinitival complement constructions, but not indicative, as in (9):

(9) a. Profesoara a început { să cadă / a cădea / *că cade } 'The teacher began to fall.'

b. Domnul s-a apucat { să demonstreze / a demonstra / *Că demonstrează } că nu am dreptate.

'The gentleman set out to demonstrate that I wasn't right.'

Still another redundancy rule would state that verbs which influence behavior require subjunctive complements, as in (10)-(12):

(10) Te rog să-mi aduci cartea.

'I beg you to bring me the book.'

(11) Nu permit să pleci.

'I don't permit you to leave.'

(12) Nu s-a lăsat să cadă.

'He didn't let himself fall.'

Redundancy rules such as these constitute an improvement over an

analysis like Rosenbaum's (which needs arbitrary syntactic features for each sentence embedding verb) because the correlation between semantic class of the matrix verb and the syntactic form of the complement is taken into account. Even more desirable however, would be the postulation of deeper principles which underlie these particular relationships.

What I would like to propose is that there is such a set of principles, and that they have to do with the semantic restrictions on the selection of the subject and the tense of the verb in the embedded sentences, regardless of the semantic class of the matrix verb.

To illustrate this, consider first the two extremes of freedom of subject and tense selection. The first case is when the matrix verb permits no free selection of complement subject and verb tense at all. These verbs both infinitival and subjunctive complements, but do not occur with indicative complements. Some sort of very ad-hoc redundancy rule to reflect this might look something like

$V_{\text{permitting no independent selection of complement subject or tense}}$
u Complementizer Insertion rule ⊃ optional subjunctive
optional infinitive

Verbs of this kind are roughly speaking equivalent to Perlmutter's "like subject verbs", such as începe 'begin' and încerca 'try', as in:

(13) Studentul a $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{început}\\ \text{încercat}\end{matrix}\right\}$ $\left\{\begin{matrix}\text{să meargă}\\ \text{a merge}\\ \text{că merge}\end{matrix}\right\}$ 'The student began (tried) to go.'

(For lack of time I will assume it is clear what I mean by no independent selection of subject and tense in the embedded sentence.)

Others in this class are:

a porni	'begin, set out to'
a primi	'agree to'
a şti	'know how to'
a învăta	'teach how to'
a apuca	'begin'
a grăbi	'hurry'
a izbuti	'succeed in'
a îndrăzni	'dare'
a înceta	'cease'
a putea	'be able'
a fi gata	'be ready'
a fi obligat	'be obliged'

Also subject to these principles are cases where the complement subject must be coreferential to the object to the matrix verb rather than the subject:

(14) Vă invităm { a face / să faceţi } o anchetă la scoală.

'We invite you to take a poll at school.'

The other extreme comes about when there are no restrictions at all on the identity of the complement subject nor on the verb tense. For those verbs indicative complements are inserted:

V_{no restrictions on complement subject or tense}
u Complementizer Insertion ⊃ indicative

This is the case with the following kinds of verbs for example.

1. Verbs which comment on the truth value of a proposition:

(15) { e probabil / e adevărat / e indiscutabil / sînt convins / mi se pare } că tata a plecat devreme.

2. Verbs of communication (See (8a-d)).

3. Verbs of perception:

(16) Observ că sînteţi supăraţi.

'I notice that you are angry.'

(17) Am visat că m-a sărutat un urs.

'I dreamed that a bear kissed me.'

(18) Actorul a anunţat că va pleca din oraş.

'The actor announced that he would leave the city.'

In complements consisting of a head noun with a sentence in apposition to it, the same generalizations apply. Nouns like obiceul 'the custom', dorinţa 'the wish', învoirea 'the permission', plăcerea 'the pleasure', and intenţia 'the intention', which do not permit free subject or tense selection in the sentence in apposition to them, permit infinival and subjunctive complements:

(19) Mi-am exprimat dorinţa { de a vedea / să văd } copiii.

'I felt the desire to see the children.'

(20) Regele a cerut învoirea { de a domni. / să domnească. }

'The king asked for permission to rule.'

(21) Am onoarea { de a vă anunţa / să vă anunţ } că aţi cîstigat premiul.

'I have the honor to announce to you that you have won the prize.'

(22) Am avut intenţia { de a vă invita / să vă invităm } la masă.

'We had the intention of inviting you to eat.'

On the other hand, head nouns which impose no restrictions on the complement sentence, such as faptul 'the fact', gîndul 'the thought', and credinţa 'the belief', occur with indicative constructions:

(23) N-am uitat faptul că ai fost bolnav.

'I haven't forgotten the fact that you were sick.'

(24) Gîndul că va întîrzia nu-i plăcea.

'The though that he would be late didn't please him.'

(25) Credința că guvernul a căzut nu este adevărat.

'The belief that the government has fallen is not true.'

Between the two extremes of freedom and total restriction on complement subject and tense selection are cases where the embedding verb permits free subject selection but not verb tense selection. These verbs normally require subjunctive complements, as in:

(26) a. Vreau { să merg. / *că merg. } 'I want to go.'

b. Vreau { să / *că } mergi tu. 'I want you to go.'

(27) a. Prefer { să / *că } mă duc mîine. 'I prefer to leave tomorrow.'

b. Prefer { să / *că } te duci mîine. 'I prefer for you to leave tomorrow.'

Still to be discussed are instances where differences in complement constructions reflect differences in meaning, such as:

(28) I-am spus că îmi dă ajutor. 'I told him that he was helping me.'

(29) I-am spus să-mi dea ajutor. 'I told him to help me.'

Rather than constituting counterexamples to the kind of redundancy rules I have been proposing, sentences like the above tend to support them. Notice first that not only a spune, but all verbs of communication have the same properties, as in the sentences below for example, with a scrie 'to write':

(30) Tata mi-a scris să plec imediat. 'Dad wrote me to leave right away.'

(31) Tata mi-a scris că plec imediat. 'Dad wrote me that I am leaving right away.'

Since verbs of communication can communicate either a command or a simple message, there must be some way of distinguishing the pairs in the underlying structure, perhaps by postulating homophonous pairs of verbs, or by the presence or absence of an abstract head noun 'command' in sentences like (2a) and (2b) which is later deleted. Whatever the best characterization turns out to be, there will have to be some means of specifying that the verbs communicating a simple message impose no restrictions on the complement, while the verbs expressing commands permit no free tense selection, in which case the complement type does not need to be specified because it follows automatically from the redundancy rules.

The verbs a sti 'to know', and a învăta 'to learn, to teach' occur with both subjunctive, and indicative complement constructions, and in the literary language, infinitival complements:

(32) a. Fetița nu știa să vorbească bine.
b. Fetița nu știa a vorbi bine. } 'The little girl didn't know how to speak well.'
c. Fetița nu știa că vorbește bine. 'The little girl didn't know that she spoke well.'

(33) a. El m-a învățat să vorbesc bine. } 'He taught me to speak well.'
b. El m-a învățat a vorbi bine.
c. El m-a învățat că vorbesc bine. 'He taught me that I speak well.'

Notice that the verbs in the (a) and (b) sentences mean approximately the same as English 'to know how' and 'to teach how' (i.e. 'cause to come to know how'), while the (c) sentences are the equivalent of 'to know a fact' and 'to teach (acause to come to know) a fact'. One possible way of characterizing these differences is to assume the presence in the underlying structure of a 'manner' head noun in the (a) and (b) sentences, and perhaps

a 'fact' head noun in the others. What is clear is that the pairs of meanings will have to be distinguished in one way or another at the level which characterizes meaning, and that the 'manner' versions will impose restrictions on complement subject and tense, since there is no free selection at all is permitted with them. As a result the redundancy rules will account for the syntactic properties of the complement constructions.

There are many verbs which can have as a complement either any proposition, or a complement which describes an action. Verbs which describe a mental attitude are of this kind, as we see in (34) and (35) below:

(34) Îmi place (faptul) că înot. 'I like it (the fact) that I swim.'

(35) Îmi place să înot. 'I like to swim.'

There are again several possible alternatives for distinguishing between these sets of meanings. One is that there is a abstract head noun faptul 'fact' present in the underlying structure of sentences like (34) and another head noun corresponding to English act in the complement of sentences like (35). If this is the case, the head noun faptul does not impose any restrictions on the nature of the complement, while the act head noun does not permit any independent tense selection at all. The appropriate complementizers would again follow from the redundancy rules.

It is obvious that the generalizations which I have proposed are still very rough and in need of refining. Moreover, it is likely that the distribution of complement types is not completely systematic, since chance and historical changes contribute to the creation of many exceptions and idiosyncracies in syntactic properties. For this reason the (ad hoc)

redundancy rules which I have suggested make use of the marked-unmarked concept. Exceptions to the general rules would simply be marked as exceptions. I believe that the same principles apply to other constructions also, such as sentential complements of prepositions and adverbs, but limitations of time exclude such a discussion at this time.

Essentially what I have been saying is that when tense in the embedded sentence is redundant it is eliminated and either the infinitive or subjunctive, which are both essentially tenseless, is inserted. If however, there are no restrictions, indicative complements occur, since the indicative contains the full range of tenses. Any teleological explanation such as this of course is merely conjecture at this point, but similar principles seem to exist in English and in other Romance Languages, suggesting that some sort of principles of economy are at work in the distribution of complement constructions.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ca să does occur of course, with no intervening element, but not in the particular constructions under discussion. Rather, ca să is an adverbial conjunction of purpose.
2. See Rosenbaum, Peter S., The Grammar of English Predicate Complement Constructions, 1967. Cambridge, M.I.T. Press.
3. E. Vasiliu and Sanda Golopenţia-Eretescu, Sintaxa Transformaţională a Limbii Române, Bucureşti, 1969.
4. What I am suggesting is that these conjunctions are grammatical connectives free of meaning at least in sentential predicate complementation. In other instances (ca) să and că seem to have semantic content, such as purpose- [(ca) să] or reason (că). However, it may turn out to be best in these cases to posit in the underlying structure semantic primes such as 'purpose' and 'reason', which are later deleted. In this case the conjunctions (ca) să and că will be inserted naturally by rules which I will propose below.
5. Rosenbaum, op. cit., Robin Lakoff, Abstract Syntax and Latin Complementation. Research Monograph Series, 49. Cambridge: MIT Press. Keith Sauer, Sentential Complementation in Spanish, unpublished Ph D. Dissertation, 1972.